

U.S. EPA fines the University of California for violations of the stratospheric ozone protection program

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SAN FRANCISCO -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has reached a \$118,404 settlement with the University of California over violations of the federal Clean Air Act.

The civil penalty stems from stratospheric ozone protection violations identified during inspections of U.C.'s Berkeley and Davis campuses in October and December 2002, respectively.

High in the atmosphere, the stratospheric ozone layer is the earth's protective shield against excessive ultraviolet radiation. Overexposure to ultraviolet radiation has been held responsible for increased risk of skin cancer and cataracts, depressed immune systems, decreased crop output, and the destruction of plankton -- a critical link in the oceanic food chain.

The stratospheric ozone protection program aims to prevent depletion of the ozone layer through a national recycling and emission reduction program directed at the use and disposal of ozone-depleting refrigerants.

"It is important that facilities using certain ozone depleting substances manage them responsibly and in accordance with the stratospheric ozone protection regulations, or face swift action by the EPA," said Deborah Jordan, director of the air division in EPA's Pacific Southwest Region.

This program includes leak repair and record-keeping requirements for refrigeration equipment and appliances containing greater than 50 pounds of ozone-depleting refrigerants.

EPA inspectors identified 15 violations of the stratospheric ozone protection regulations at the two campuses. Such violations included: failure to properly remove the refrigerant from two appliances at Berkeley; failure to adequately repair leaks from one appliance at Berkeley and two appliances at Davis within 30 days of discovering them; failure to develop a one-year retirement or retrofit plan for the leaking appliance at Berkeley; and failure to keep proper refrigerant-related records when servicing three appliances at Berkeley and six appliances at Davis.

For more information visit: <http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/title1.html#ib>

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